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"lobby," to "committee hearings" as a healthy sign; advocates the choice of the speaker by popular vote; and sees in a certain senator's designation of the committees as "little legislatures" an indication of their future history. Congress may "resolve, say, to make each one at least of the principal committees a true miniature of itself. The children of the old assembly will in their maturity have separate homes of their own," with all the appliances and conveniences for separate work, of which a record may be kept. In this chapter, as well as in those following on "The Committees and Private Interests," "The Control by the House," "Select and Standing Committees," "Equality and Leadership" and "Bonds between Judiciary, Executive and Congress," one finds abundant evidence of careful research and of fresh and minute information gained at first hand from contact with the living actors in the great congressional drama. The chapters on the Senate are written in a similar spirit.

On the whole, Dr. McConachie has given us a valuable contribution to the study of American politics. His book is not free from faults of style. There is too much use of simile and metaphor, not always skillfully employed, which sometimes obscures the sense or in a provoking way takes the place of exact statement when precision is greatly needed. Still, even with this fault, not a very prominent one, the book is one of the very best in Professor Ely's useful series.

GEORGE ELLIOTT HOWARD.

Proceedings of the Louisville Conference for Good City Government, and of the Third Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, held May 5, 6 and 7, 1897. Philadelphia, National Municipal League, 1897. — vi, 294 pp.

The groping of the student of city government for the true solution of American problems would be most amusing were the situation not so serious. This last volume of *Proceedings* contains hardly a paper that does not present some panacea for our ills, and many a writer affects surprise that we have not yet adopted his remedy. In nearly every case the remedy suggested "has been tried in European countries with great success."

The English council system receives considerable endorsement, especially in the paper by Mr. Frank M. Loomis, entitled "The Exclusion of Partisan Politics from Municipal Affairs." Mr. Loomis asserts that a small number of elective offices and nomination by petition are the characteristic features of the English system and of

European systems generally, and that these features account for the efficiency of English and Continental administration. We have here a mistake of fact and a defect of logic. A small number of elective offices is not one of the characteristic features of English local government. In addition to the borough council or urban district council, there are boards of guardians, school boards, *etc.*; and Englishmen themselves criticise the multiplicity of their local authorities. The error of logic is the familiar *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. If the factors mentioned above were the *sine qua non*, there might be some ground for Mr. Loomis's conclusion; but there are other factors, which he ignores, that have had greater influence. Some of these will be suggested by even a cursory reading of Professor Goodnow's paper upon "The Powers of Municipal Corporations" and of Mr. MacVeagh's paper on "The Business Man in Municipal Politics." Limited suffrage, a higher standard of official skill, a civil service based on merit, a different relation between the central government and the local authorities, and a more perfect differentiation of functions — all these are factors quite as important as those upon which Mr. Loomis lays stress. Mr. Loomis also develops the thesis that the legal recognition of the caucus is the primary cause of "partisanship" in municipal politics, and that the withdrawal of this legal recognition would result in the nomination and election of more efficient men. But it is a serious question whether the advantages of concerted action would not perpetuate the caucus with its prestige undimmed, even if it were not recognized by law. It existed before it was recognized, and it probably would continue to exist after recognition had been withdrawn.

The paper by Mr. Horace E. Deming, "The Legislature in City and State — 1797-1897," is mainly devoted to an examination of the wide distrust, both of state legislatures and of city councils, that has grown up within the present century. In the state this distrust has led to the embodying in the constitutions of many stringent limitations upon the powers of the legislature. As regards the city, special legislation and the transfer of powers from the council to administrative boards have been the result. Mr. Deming finds the remedy in the English council system, and thus lays himself open to much the same criticism as does Mr. Loomis. He is undoubtedly correct in condemning legislative interference through special acts, but the remedy is hardly local irresponsibility. At the other extreme from legislative tinkering is local independence with no superior control at all, and this latter system has proved as unfavorable as the former

to efficiency of administration. The correct solution seems to be that which England has adopted fully and the United States to some extent — central administrative control with large local powers.

This plan is considered in Professor Goodnow's excellent paper, "The Powers of Municipal Corporations." After developing the thesis that the city is both "an agent of the state government" and "an organization for the satisfaction of local needs," he maintains that the real problem of municipal government is not to find the proper internal organization of the municipality, but to provide the proper system of central control over those functions which interest the state as a whole, and at the same time to grant freedom of action in matters that are of purely local interest. In place of legislative control, which for reasons given must necessarily lead to inefficiency, Professor Goodnow would substitute the plan stated above, which he shows is correct in theory and beneficial in practice. Where it has been tried, special legislation and interference in local matters for political reasons have disappeared. Local interest has been stimulated rather than retarded, and greater efficiency of administration has always followed. In England, for example, where this theory has been consistently followed, the average number of local and personal acts annually passed by Parliament from 1881 to 1890 for all of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales was only 172. During the same period the New York legislature yearly enacted 128 relating to cities alone.

Professor Rowe, in his paper upon "American Political Ideas and Institutions in their Relations to the Problem of City Government," looks at the situation from a different point of view. He argues that our failure to secure efficient municipal government is due, in part at least, to our attempt to solve municipal problems along the lines which we follow in our national and state governments. The peculiar conditions of city life foredoom such experiments to failure. In the last two-thirds of his paper Professor Rowe makes an energetic plea for new departures in municipal activity, adopting as premises the strong influence of environment and the marked effect of offering new services or commodities. Let the city once set an example, and other agencies will follow it. Let the city offer a commodity at a lower price than is being paid for one that is less desirable, and the new commodity will be substituted for the old. By properly choosing the new services to be offered, the standards of life may be elevated and a higher social order established. Many will conclude that it would, therefore, be wise to increase municipal functions; but Professor Rowe does not go so far. He merely

shows the possible influence of the city through its power to determine environment and to offer new services. He errs in not pointing out that with this great power for good there is an equally great power for evil. He is to be criticised not so much upon what he says as upon what he fails to say. But perhaps he is willing to accept the doctrine that by increasing municipal functions better government will be secured — a doctrine maintained in some quarters, but containing quite as much error as truth.

The other papers in this interesting and stimulating volume are devoted to describing municipal conditions in various cities, their form of government, and the efforts that have been made to secure better administration and a higher standard of service. Mr. Clinton Rogers Woodruff briefly reviews the year's work in our larger cities, and points out that three subjects have absorbed the attention of practical reformers — namely, charter reform, public control of municipal monopolies and civil service reform. All in all, the outlook seems to be encouraging.

MILO ROY MALTBIE.

NEW YORK CITY.

The Finances of the City of New York. By EDWARD DANA DURAND, PH.D. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1898. — 397 pp.

In giving us this little book Dr. Durand has done a genuine public service, particularly because of the very immediate applicability of his work to the solution of the municipal problem in our chief American city. The difficulties of the author's task were many, and can scarcely be appreciated by those who have made no effort to understand the complexities of our so-called financial system — can, in fact, be appreciated only by those who, after devoting years to its study, have discovered its almost complete unintelligibility. Thus, the taxpayer, desiring to find out what the cost of city government is, naturally and necessarily has recourse to the annual report of the comptroller. The first thing he discovers is the complete impossibility of finding out from this source anything whatever with regard to the expenditures for the two years immediately preceding, because of the simple fact that the law is systematically disregarded by keeping the reports invariably from a year and a half to two years in arrears. The taxpayer's inquiry, therefore, instead of yielding practical results, becomes entirely historical. When he does attack the comptroller's report, — even if he be an expert accountant, provided he has had no experience in some one of the chief departments